

Senator Hall is absent this morning and requested me to handle his amendment. This, just to refresh the memories of the members of the body, we have pending before us a Landis amendment. The Landis amendment is a substantial amendment to the act that has several different portions. The question on this amendment was divided when we last debated this issue. The division that is currently being considered is the division that deals with the safety committee that would be established under the Landis amendment that essentially would require employers to establish a committee consisting of either a collection of representatives determined through a collective bargaining agreement in the case of an employer whose employees are unionized or, in the alternative, would require the committee to be...to consist of an equal number of members representing employees and the employer. There is a...and the purpose of this committee would be to examine the working conditions that exist in the business, whatever business that may be, and to come up with recommendations regarding the operation of the business, the purpose of which would be to ensure the greatest amount of safety for the employees of that business. We considered several amendments regarding this issue the other day when we discussed LB 757, all of which were rejected. We currently are dealing with an amendment that Senator Hall introduced and, in fact, that I handled the other day dealing with the cost of maintaining a safety committee. The current language in the Landis amendment would state that the cost of maintaining and operating the safety committee shall be minimal to the employer. What the Hall amendment that I'm handling would do is to strike that language. The reasoning behind the Hall amendment is very simple, that by stating in the bill that the cost of maintaining the committee would be minimal to the employer, it leaves open-ended where, in fact, that cost would come from and if an employer or through a collective bargaining agreement the employer, in conjunction with the employees, would choose to employ a committee of this type that would have a substantial amount of work to do that, in fact, might rack up a considerable cost, the language in the statute would be silent as to how that committee would be paid for except for stating under the Landis amendment that the cost would be minimal to the employer. And what that leaves open is the potential for the employer shifting the cost for operating this committee to the employees and, in effect, subsidizing the existence of the safety committee on the backs of the employees. If you adopt the Hall amendment, it would strike that language. The statute would be silent on how the committee would be funded and that